



# Dateline ERS

New ERS research and analysis at: [www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov)

Economic Research Service

September 2010

U.S. Department of Agriculture

ERS is a primary source of economic research and analysis from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, providing timely information on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America.



## Farm Income

## Forecast 2010

[www.ers.usda.gov/Features/farmincome/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Features/farmincome/)

## Commodity Markets and Trade

ERS Outlook reports provide timely analysis of major commodity markets and trade.

### This Month

- Cotton and Wool
- Feed
- Fruit and Tree Nuts
- Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry
- Oil Crops
- Rice
- Sugar and Sweeteners
- Wheat

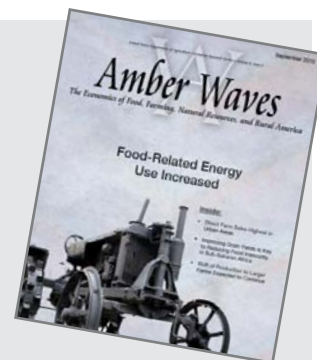
All reports along with a calendar of future releases are available at:

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/outlook](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/outlook)


## Amber Waves September 2010

**Amber Waves** magazine presents the full range of ERS research and analysis, covering food, farming, natural resources, and rural America.

[www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/)



### Fuel for Food: Energy Use in the U.S. Food System

In 2007, the U.S. food system accounted for almost 16 percent of the Nation's energy budget, up from 14 percent in 2002. Greater reliance on energy-intensive technologies throughout the food system, along with population growth and higher per capita food expenditures, boosted food-related energy consumption. [Listen to the Podcast](#) 

### A Positive Path for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa: Options and Challenges

This article examines the current and projected food security situation in Sub-Saharan Africa and the factors driving the trends. While ERS analysis points to deteriorating food security in the region over the next 10 years, increases in capital inflows grain yields can significantly alter the projections.

### Taxing Caloric Sweetened Beverages To Curb Obesity

Increased obesity among the U.S. population has prompted public health advocates to call for a tax on sweetened beverages. Faced with such a tax, consumers are likely to substitute untaxed beverages, such as bottled water, juice, and milk. A tax that increases the price of caloric sweetened beverages by 20 percent could cause an average reduction of 3.8 pounds of body weight over a year for adults and 4.5 pounds for children.

### World Sugar Price Volatility Intensified by Market and Policy Factors

This article highlights major factors affecting the fluctuations of global sugar prices over the past few years, particularly the role of production patterns and government policies in the Central Asia and Brazil and how they are projected onto the global sugar market.

### U.S. Farm Structure: Declining-But Persistent-Small Commercial Farms

The continuing shift in production away from small commercial farms to larger farms is driven by financial pressures and aging operators. Some small commercial farms are profitable, while others stay in business by accepting low returns for their labor. Small commercial farms produced 22 percent of farm output in 2007.

### Accelerated Productivity Growth Offsets Decline in Resource Expansion in Global Agriculture

Rapid increases in agricultural commodity prices during 2006-08 raised concerns that agricultural productivity growth may not be keeping up with increasing demand for agricultural commodities. ERS has developed a new index of total factor productivity (TFP) in global agriculture to provide a more comprehensive understanding of longrun sources of agricultural output growth. ERS research shows that the average rate of growth in global agricultural TFP has accelerated in recent decades and accounts for an increasing share of growth in agricultural production.

## Agriculture's Role in Curbing Greenhouse Gases

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EB15/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EB15/)

Agriculture could play a prominent role in U.S. efforts to address climate change if farms and ranches undertake activities that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions or take greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere. These activities may include shifting to conservation tillage, reducing the amount of nitrogen fertilizer applied to crops, changing livestock and manure management practices, and planting trees or grass. According to ***The Role of Agriculture in Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions***, the extent to which farmers adopt such activities would depend on their costs, potential revenues, and other economic incentives created by climate policy. Existing Federal conservation programs provide preliminary estimates of the costs of agricultural carbon sequestration.



Shutterstock

---

## ACRE Program Payments and Risk Reduction:

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR101/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR101/)



Crop revenue variability, which differs across crops and their growing regions and the geographic levels at which revenue is measured, is the focus of the Average Crop Revenue Election, an agricultural commodity program that was first available to producers in 2009. ***ACRE Program Payments and Risk Reduction: An Analysis Based on Simulations of Crop Revenue Variability*** uses an empirically-based simulation model of an extensive set of representative farm acres of corn, soybeans, wheat and cotton to analyze how ACRE payments would vary under different guarantee price and expected market price scenarios and how ACRE payments and risk reduction would be distributed across crops and regions.

Shutterstock

---

## Rural America at a Glance - 2010 Edition

[www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB68/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB68/)

Developments in the rural economy during 2009 and early 2010 were largely driven by national economic trends. The recession that began at the end of 2007 and continued into 2009 was associated with depressed housing sales and values, a stock market slump, and a widespread bank credit crisis as well as declines in employment and output. All of these had effects in rural areas. ***Rural America at a Glance - 2010 Edition*** highlights the most recent indicators of social and economic conditions in rural areas for use in developing policies and programs to assist rural areas. The 2010 edition focuses on the U.S. rural economy, including employment trends, poverty, and demographics.



Shutterstock

[How to get more information...](#)

More information about the items featured in DatelineERS can be found on our website: [www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov) by going to the web address listed in each article. This newsletter is available online at [www.ers.usda.gov/news](http://www.ers.usda.gov/news)